

Message Text

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UNCLAS KUWAIT 4865

FOR NEA/ARP

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: BDIS KU
SUBJECT: PROBLEM WITH WATER DESALINIZATION UNITS

1. KUWAITI BUSINESSMAN AND FORMER MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS, KHALID AL-ESSA, REQUESTED EMBASSY ASSISTANCE IN SOLVING PROBLEM WITH RECENTLY PURCHASED WATER DESALINATION UNITS. AL-ESSA PURCHASED SMALL (40,000 GALLONS PER DAY UNIT) FROM ROGA DIVISION OF UNIVERSAL OIL PRODUCTS CO. FOR USE ON HIS FARM. PURCHASE MADE LATE LAST YEAR. FOUR ADDITIONAL UNITS (50,000 GPD CAPACITY) WERE PURCHASED EARLY THIS YEAR, ALL FOR USE BY MEMBERS OF KUWAITI ROYAL FAMILY. TWO UNITS PURCHASED BY CROWN PRINCE AND PRIME MINISTER, SHEIKH JABER AL-AHMAD; ONE UNIT BY MINISTER OF DEFENSE AND INTERIOR, SHEIKH SA'AD AL-ABDULLAH; ONE UNIT BY FOREIGN MINISTER, SHAIKH SABAH AL-AHMAD.

2. SEVERAL UNITS ARE NOT RPT NOT FUNCTIONING PROPERLY ACCORDING TO AL-ESSA. BOTH UNITS PURCHASED BY CROWN PRINCE INSTALLED IN DASN N PALACE. ONE WORKS, ONE DOES NOT. UNIT PURCHASED BY FOREIGN MINISTER STOPPED FUNCTIONING TWO WEEKS AFTER INSTALLATION. MR. AL-ESSA REPORTS HIS UNIT HAS ALSO BROKEN DOWN. EQUIPMENT PURCHASED BY MINISTER OF DEFENSE REMAINS IN ORIGINAL PACKING CASES.

3. ACCORDING TO AL-ESSA, ROGA WAS RECENTLY SOLD BY GULF OIL CORP. TO UNIVERSAL OIL PRODUCTS CO. TO FURTHER COMPLICATE MATTERS, A THIRD COMPANY, AJAX INTERNATIONAL CORPORATION SUPPLIES
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PART OF THE EQUIPMENT AND THERE IS QUESTION OF WHICH COMPANY

HAS RESPONSIBILITY FOR AFTER SALES SERVICE. AL-ESSA HAS BEEN CORRESPONDING WITH ROGA WHICH HAS RECOGNIZED EXISTING PROBLEMS AND PROMISED SOLUTION. AFTER DISCUSSION WITH AL-ESSA, IT SEEMS SATISFACTORY SOLUTION TO PROBLEM WILL PROBABLY INVOLVE REPLACEMENT OR REPAIR OF DAMAGED PARTS, RESTORATION OF EQUIPMENT TO PROPER WORKING ORDER AND INSTRUCTIONS FOR OPERATORS WHO ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR UNITS.

4. ACTION REQUESTED: REQUEST USDOC CONTACT U.S. FIRMS AND OBTAIN THEIR VIEWS AND THEIR SUGGESTIONS FOR SOLUTION OF PROBLEM. ADDRESSES ARE: UNIVERSAL OIL PRODUCTS CO., ROGA DIVISION, 2980 NORTH HARBOR DR., SAN DIEGO, CALIF 92101 PHONE: (714) 299-9920; AJAX INTERNATIONAL CORP., P.O. BOX 4007, SANTA BARBARA, CALIF. 93103 PHONE: (805) 966-1796. AS ROGA CONTACT WE HAVE BEEN GIVEN NAME OF JAMES SLEIGH. WE HAVE NO CONTACT FOR AJAX.

5. COMMENT: GOK PLANS CONSTRUCTION OF SEVERAL NEW WATER DESALINATION PLANTS SOON. SELLING U.S. EQUIPMENT AND TECHNOLOGY TO GOVERNMENT MAY PROVE DIFFICULT IN LIGHT OF THESE DEVELOPMENTS. HOWEVER, IT IS POSSIBLE THAT POORLY TRAINED OPERATORS OR LACK OF UNDERSTANDING OF EQUIPMENT CAPABILITIES CONTRIBUTED TO PROBLEMS.
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